

EPISODE 166

[INTRODUCTION]

[00:00:32]

FT: Hey everyone, welcome back to So Money. I'm your host Farnoosh Torabi. So a question for you: Do you even leave a tip when you go to your local coffee shop? Do you always leave a tip, sometimes? You know, I do this maybe once a week, depending on how often I frequented the coffee shop. It also depends on my mood! I'll drop a dollar in the jar, maybe a little bit more if my order is particularly complicated, and say there's like a really long line and the staff's being really cheerful and doing a good job of getting everybody ushered through the line. So it's not a daily habit or even a regular habit, and it used to be that when we were paying with cash for most of these day-to-day expenditures, that tipping was easier, right? We would just drop that dollar in, or drop whatever change we go into the jar. But now since everything's gone electronic, largely, you know paying with your Apple Pay, with your iPhone, with your credit card. So tipping has become less and less of a habit or of a likelihood.

So our guest today actually has come up with a solution. His name is Ryder Kessler and he came up with a business idea while online at his local coffee shop, watching people skip the cash tip jar at the counter, he saw a need in the marketplace to help those who rely on cash tips to bolster their income, and he created a product called dip jar. His name is Ryder Kessler, as I mentioned, and I first met him a month ago as I was moderating the annual Financial Solutions Lab, or Fin Lab, competition where there were about a dozen fin tech startups competing to win one of several awards to receive direct and indirect support from the Centre for Financial Services Innovation and JPMorgan Chase. And as a member of Fin Lab, you get to test and expand your product and services to consumers.

Now Ryder presented and he, I thought, gave a really compelling presentation. I thought, "Wow, imagine if you're at Starbucks online and you're paying with your debit or your credit card or your phone, it's not that easy to leave a cash tip especially if you don't have any cash in your wallet, right? So what if you could dip your credit card and leave a tip for the barista?" Now Ryder has an interesting background. He worked at 2 startups before temporarily leaving the

tech world to pursue a PhD in English Literature. The one constant in his life has been the coffee shops he frequents where his baristas are a surrogate family, he says. He had the idea for "Dip Jar" after talking to these baristas about how their customers shifted from paying with cash to credit. And before Dip Jar he worked at a cab sharing startup called "Band Wagon". He also studied at Harvard and he has a Masters in English Literature from Columbia.

So Dip Jar, it's a tip jar for credit cards. That's basically what it is. It's a physical device that sits next to the cash tip jar and allows tips with a one-step "dip" of the credit card. I like that. Now, we're going to learn a lot about Ryder's business idea, further about his business idea, and also his personal perspectives on money. For example, he grew up in New York City. Which I always find fascinating. I love meeting people who were born and raised in the Big Apple. I mean I've just been living here for my adult life and it's been quite the reality or non-reality in some ways. I feel like we live in a bubble here in New York City. So what was is like growing up in New York, how did that shape his views on money, the concept of cashless generosity - can it work? And how Ryder's bad money behaviours, oh yes, impact his life. He's got plenty of bad behaviours. I ask him about what are some good behaviours? He gives me bad behaviours. That's how honest he is.

Here we go, 3-2-1, Ryder Kessler.

[00:04:22]

[INTERVIEW]

FT: Ryder Kessler, welcome to So Money. Very excited to have a Fin Tech entrepreneur on the show. Welcome.

[00:04:31]

RK: It's my pleasure to be here. Thank you.

[00:04:34]

FT: I remember, I was in the room when you were sharing your story about how Dip Jar was born. And I guess what happened is that you noticed that the baristas at your favourite coffee shop in your college town weren't receiving as many tips, largely because people were paying with their credit cards, right? They didn't have cash in their wallets. I'm curious, I heard your story and now that I have you on the show I have the opportunity to ask you, it's one thing to recognize a problem in the marketplace, it's another to say, "You know what, I'm gonna go out and invent something to help solve this problem."

What made you confident that you could create a solution? You have a PhD English Literature, not exactly the resume you would expect of someone who would go on to invent a piece of technology. So take us to that moment. What made you feel you have the confidence to really make this a reality?

[00:05:21]

RK: Sure, and I do have to make a small correction the PhD quite yet. I did 4 years towards it, but I never finished my dissertation. So I don't wanna claim the doctorate prematurely. [Both laugh]

[00:05:36]

FT: Sorry, I'll have to go back to my fact checking department and slap some wrists.

[00:05:41]

RK: [Laughs] No it's alright! I think Columbia University would be upset if I claimed I'd gotten the degree. So yeah, it's a really great question. I'll just fill in a little bit more context about that moment. It was back in October 2008 after I'd graduated from college and I was back in town. And yah, I had this experience where I was waiting on a very long line to order coffee at one of my favorite places. And yeah, when I finally got up to order I said to the barista just, "How's it going? Nice to see you." And she made a point that because the store was so busy, she was very unhappy and overwhelmed. And my immediate thought was, "Well you must at least have a financial upside to a busy store? You must have more tips?" And she said, "No. I used to get

\$4-\$5 in cash tips every hour, but that was back when people paid with cash and now they pay with credit cards and I get maybe 50 cents. But I'd rather the store be empty."

And that experience really crystallized for me that hardworking service employee were losing out on real wages because of this shift from cash to plastic and that that was probably gonna hurt the store, and it certainly hurt me as a consumer who wanted to tip but couldn't since I was paying with my credit card every day. And I thought, in that moment, "Oh you know what would be cool? If there were a tip jar for credit cards where I could just dip my card to leave a dollar in the same way you drop a dollar bill in the cash jar. But in the telling of the story it's very easy to imagine than, you know, going out and building something. But actually, it was just an idea for many years. I then went on to work at a couple of startups and so I saw, over a course of a few years, how product really get built, how sometimes they don't end up getting built, how companies raise money, how sometime companies end up not being able to raise money.

And so I felt much more prepared after having those experiences to go out and do this. And as you said, I did a bunch of work towards a PhD in English, which was another thing I really loved but totally unrelated. And then I just kept going to coffee shops and seeing that this still didn't exist and these people were still hurting and charities that collect cash donations were still missing out. And I still, as a credit card payer and user, was being deprived of the opportunity to be generous in all of these settings. So finally I said to myself, "Okay, I just have to do this." I worked at startups, I knew that I could kind of take the reigns of creating a company. If I had known exactly how difficult making a piece of hardware would be, if I'd know exactly how difficult getting into the payment space and really trying to process micro transactions would be, I might not have done it frankly. I think I'm glad that I was a little bit blind to how big the challenges were.

So I just had to take it one day at a time and make a prototype and start testing and getting feedback and working to keep making it and raise money and build a team, and now it's really edifying to see how much we've accomplished. But in every moment it was just about getting one step further in the process. And because I have a background in literature, I'll quote E.L Doctorow or I'll paraphrase. He said something about "Writing a novel is like driving at night. You don't see the end point but with your headlights you can see a little bit in front of you at

every step, and eventually you'll make your way home." I think it's a little bit like that. You just tackle one challenge at a time and eventually you'll get where you want it to go.

[00:09:18]

FT: Technology changes every day, Ryder, to the point now where people are paying for their coffee with their phones. I mean, Starbucks has made it that you can just use your iPhone to pay. So credit cards might not be around in the future, at least not as much as they are today. Does that threaten something like Dip Jar?

[00:09:37]

RK: That's a really great question, and I think about it in two ways. One is that we talk a lot about kind of "alternative payments methods" and certainly Apple Pay gets a lot of attention and NFC payments more broadly - NFC meaning "Near Field Communication" and basically tap payment, of which Apple Pay is a part. But actually, outside of the tech bubble, out in the real world, I don't think it really is picking up as much steam as the tech blogs would have us think. There's really interesting recent data about Apple Pay adoption and after 6 months of iPhone 6 phones sitting in people's pockets, only about 15% of iPhone 6 users had tried Apple Pay. So 85% had not used it even once. They didn't really feel compelled to tether their cards to their phones and find a terminal that would accept it. And this isn't 85% of the population, it's not even 85% of smartphone owners, it's 85% of what is clearly a group of early adopters and even they are kind of hard-pressed to find a reason to switch over.

I think a lot of people are trying to solve the problem of credit cards but credit cards really aren't broken. They work remarkably well. You pull them out of your pocket, you swipe, and you're done. They're really has to be a true value-add before people are going to switch to something a bit more arduous or complicated. 70% of point of sale transactions now happen with magnetic stripes and NFC payments don't even register - they're far less than 1%. So that's part of my thinking, that really Dip Jar wants to enable cashless generosity today and we want to let people with these cards in their pockets, which are pretty much everyone, leave a tip at a coffee shop or at a valet or give a donation to their favorite charity or give money to their church collection plate or synagogues Tzedakah box with their credit card.

But the other way that I think about it is that Dip Jar isn't just about credit cards. Dip Jar is about cashless generosity and so we wanna follow the payment trends. If people do start paying with their phones, or alternative payment methods, Dip Jar is perfectly enabled to add that technology to our hardware and it'll be the same experience where we handle the processing and payout to the recipients and still provide a really compelling value to them. So we think about that in a bit longer term view. But today credit cards are really where it's at.

[00:12:32]

FT: How's the roll out been? Like where can we find Dip Jar? Has it been a pretty easy sell to the merchants?

[00:12:39]

RK: Yeah. So it's been an easy sell insofar as "people want it". It's a harder sell in being able to actually provide the product. So when we first started, it was a couple years ago, I put together a few people and we make a prototype version of the product. We started by rolling out 10 first generation Dip Jars and eventually we were able to go up to 20 on the little scant resources we had. And we only had to make 1 one real sale. We sat down with the director of operations at a coffee chain here in New York and showed him what the device was. And he said, "Oh my gosh, this makes so much sense. I used to be a barista. I remember when I used to love coming to work cause the cash tip jar would be full. Now that doesn't happen anymore and we really have a morale problem. So yeah, we'll take it!" And so that was great.

That was our first sale, and then once the Dip Jar was out in the world, all of the demand was inbound. People saw it, they told their friends, there was some nice press about us, and we started just getting a flood of emails saying, "When can I get one for my coffee shop? For my dog groomer? For my sorority? For my museum?" And our challenge was really about actually being able to build a scalable version of the product. So for a long time - this was still when I was in my PhD, so Dip Jar was kind of an aside project. I was trying to raise money and fit some stars, and thinking about how I was actually gonna build a piece of hardware that could be deployed nationally. And that was really challenging, cause who was gonna put money behind a

part-time entrepreneur, PhD student in the humanities? And so it was really a challenge, but I would get those emails and I would know that this was something that needed to be built. And I would walk into those cafés where Dip Jars were and hear the barista say, "I'm so glad you're here. My last Dip Jar payment covered my electric bill this month." And so, with feedback like that I knew we had to press forward.

So without getting into too much granularity, over the last year we finally were able to raise some money. I left my PhD to do this full time, built a team that's now 6 people with some great hardware and software engineers and we actually are assembling, right now, our first 500 second generation Dip Jars, and those are going out in just a few weeks. So right now you can still see the first gen. Dip Jars at a few place around New York. But soon you'll be able to see them all over the country, and it'll be a much better product. So we're really, really excited for that launch.

[00:15:24]

FT: Very excited. And just to be clear, can you designate your own tip? Or is it like a pre-assumed, pre-determined tip? Or you can just say, "I wanna put \$1 or \$2?"

[00:15:36]

RK: Yeah. So often people can't really visualize what a tip jar for credit cards is until I kind of show them a picture or they see it in person. So it's a great question cause it is hard to see. And when I had the idea for the Dip Jar I thought, "You know what? I'll have a few buttons on it. It'll be like a jar, but at the top, instead of an opening for cash, it'll be a slide to put your card into and then pull out. But maybe it'll have a few buttons, like 50 cents, a \$1 and \$2. But thankfully, one of the first people I talked to about the idea was my older brother and I'm very, very lucky. He is an economics professor at Wharton. He's a behavioral economist and he happens to study generosity. So I really won the fraternal lottery. In my household was one of the world experts on what economists and behavioral psychologists know about generosity. And he said, "Listen, the biggest barrier to generosity is decision making friction. If people have a keypad in front of them and you're asking them to decide in the moment when they're in a busy store and they've ordered their coffee, and what is the optimal amount to tip right now? Is 50 cents too

little? Is \$2 too much? They will most-likely just freak out and walk away. But if you give them a really clear norm and say, "Look, in this coffee shop a \$1 is the right amount to tip." You just set the jar to \$1 and have that be what the person sees. And then all they have to do is choose whether or not to dip.

Of course if they go every morning and just get a \$2 coffee, they might not dip every day, but that's fine. And if they get a big order and they wanna tip \$3, they'll tip 3 times. And we have seen that in our pile of tips. So keep it really simple by having the units always pre-set. A quick extension of that point though is that our customers, so the coffee shopper, the charity, said to us very early on "You know it would be great if we could change the amount kind of if we see that every one's double dipping and we think \$2 makes more sense than \$1, it would be cool if the jar had the ability to be adjusted. So now the dollar amount is displayed on an LED screen which our customers can update at any time just by logging onto the Dip Jar website with their administrative credential and they can select "Edit" and change \$1 to \$2, and the jar will live update.

And so, from a giver's perspective it's always gonna be pre-set. But our customers have the ability to adapt the jar's pre-set amount to their use-case.

[00:18:15]

FT: Perfect. Who's your brother at Wharton? We should have him on the show! [Chuckles]

[00:18:21]

RK: You totally should. His name is Judd Kessler. He's awesome. I think I can say he's one of the world's foremost expert in generosity. I think he would not be willing to make that kind claim. But he's really interesting. He studies generosity across all different kinds of environments. So that's everything from tipping in a coffee shop to paying taxes and giving to charities through kind of calls to action by a male or on TV. So these things like organ donation, all sorts of ways that we are asked to be altruistic and economists are really interested in getting insight into why we do that and what the mechanics are. Because you know, frankly, to an economist, giving up money from your bundle of goods doesn't fit in the "Rational Actor" model of classical economics. T

Thankfully economics has come a long way from there and they understand that people are motivated by a lot of different values, including generosity.

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FT: Well I'm curious to learn about your perspectives on money growing up in the Kessler household. Now you've got two brothers both in a market where they're promoting generosity, researching generosity. But first, Ryder, what is your financial philosophy, a money mantra that helps guide your financial decisions?

[00:19:47]

RK: That is a great question. I don't know that I have a money mantra. If I were maybe a more [inaudible] entrepreneur and I apologize for the yiddish, for people out there who don't know it. If I had more entrepreneurial bluster, I'd probably say something about being reckless when you're young and taking big risks. But I know that I can only do what I'm doing because of a lot of luck. Luck that put me into a household where even if I went and started a company and totally flopped, I'd still be able to stay with my parents if I couldn't afford my rent any more. And I'd still be able to put food on my table. So I know that a lot of my opportunity has come from privilege. And I think that's something that maybe there isn't a mantra that I can pull out of air right now, but I'm gonna think about it for next time.

It's a lot about recognizing what opportunities we have and being really grateful for them, but also making sure that we can provide those opportunities for others. And so I think that's what makes me passionate about what we're building. It's not just any old startup, it's a startup that really is mission-driven by trying to provide similar opportunities to others who work so hard every day just to make ends meet. The people we hear from who use our product are people who used to use their cash tips to pay for gas in their car, to buy groceries. And for those people they might have a great idea for a startup but the exigencies of life, of just putting food on the table and gas in the tank prevent them from pursuing them.

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FT: Well I'll tell you what the philosophy is - I think I just distilled it. "With privilege comes the opportunity to help other." That's a good mantra.

[00:21:52]

RK: Yeah I like it. I like it. I'm gonna print that and put it above my desk to remind me.

[00:21:59]

FT: [Laughs] Did I just school a Masters in Science in English Literature? My goodness. It was a new day.

[00:22:06]

RK: I believe that we learn new things every day. And that's why I'm a student even in my late 20's. We always have the opportunity to get better. So I appreciate your lesson.

[00:22:20]

FT: Oh sure, well thank you. You're the one who shared it. Take us down memory lane, Ryder. I wanna know now about the Kessler household. Your greatest memory of money growing up that you think kind of shaped the way that you think about the financial world today and your personal finances today.

[00:22:37]

RK: Yeah, so I'll give you, if you'll allow me the opportunity, I'll give you 3 short anecdotes, or 3 different things that I think create the constellation. So one is that we hear all the time growing up about entrepreneurship because my grandfather, who grew up in extreme poverty, ended up starting a very successful company. And so entrepreneurship was always valorized. He was one of 8 children and he was the second oldest. So when he was born the family of 4 would take their 1 piece of fruit and cut it into 4 slices. But then when there were 8 children, they would take

the same 1 piece of fruit and cut it into 10 slices. So he went and fought in World War II and when he came back, thanks to great social programs like the GI Bill, he was able to buy a house and then, with his brother, start a women's apparel company and just worked super hard at making a product and selling it store to store, door to door, and ultimately taking that company public. And we saw what hard work could do and how it could pay off. So that was one thing that totally kind of drove me to really think about entrepreneurship as a legitimate opportunity.

But then I think another thing that really influenced me was my mother, her name is Randy Osofsky, she would also make a point that we were the Osofsky-Kessler household - being the progressive New Yorkers we were and are. In spite of the fact that her father was a very successful entrepreneur, she was always giving back and volunteering in the local homeless shelter by sleeping overnight there to provide meals and set up the beds. And she was leading the AIDS Walk team at my elementary school. So that idea that we had to provide opportunity and help to others was deep in my bones from day one.

And then the third thing is that my brother and I were always just entrepreneurial in the way that kids sometimes are where we would buy stuff at the craft shop and make pins to sell to our grandmother and kind of just have crazy ideas and start businesses. Thankfully our family really embraced and promoted that kind of entrepreneurial instinct and that ended up bearing fruit later on when I could take all of those different ideas and kind of strings from the background and tie them together into something like Dip Jar.

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FT: Way to play to the emotions of grandma!

[00:25:18]

RK: [Laughs]

[00:25:20]

FT: Like grandparents can't refuse their grandkids...

RK: Grandma was our best customer.

FT: I bet! Yeah. That goes without saying. [Laughs]

[00:25:25]

RK: But actually I worked at a couple of startups and I remember once talking about user experience just pushing for a real simplicity in what we were building. And I don't think it really came through in the end. But I thought to myself, "Any company that wants to make a product that really can scale, has to make sure that their product passes the mom test." Is your mom actually going to be able to see this thing in the world and know how it works and use it? Because if not, it might just be something you're building for your Silicon Valley peers, and not really for people out in the world. So it was really important to me thinking about the pre-set dollar amount of the Dip Jar and the easy form factor and the easy experience from the customer that, you know, "If my mom started a coffee shop, this is something she would be cool with using. If she were going to a store and saw a Salvation Army kettle on the counter that was a Dip Jar kettle, she could dip her credit card into it to give a donation." That really drives us to create something totally intuitive and secure and easy to engage with. I think there's something to be said for having your grandmother or mother being your first customers.

[00:26:47]

FT: That's brilliant, the Salvation Army kettle.

[00:26:51]

RK: Yeah.

FT: I didn't even think about that. That's huge. That would be huge.

[00:26:56]

RK: I think there's a lot of opportunity. When I tell our story sometimes, they think "Oh yeah, this is a solution for a coffee shop. This is a coffee shop product." But I think once people start seeing the world through "Dip Jar lenses", I invite you and all your listeners to do that, they will start to notice that are myriad times in everyday life when we can't be as generous as we want to be because we don't have cash. So the Santa with the Salvation Army kettle is a great example, but so is that tip for your barber, stylist, after your hair cut and leaving money in the hotel room for your housekeeper when you check out. And seeing any collection box, maybe it's on a McDonald's counter, maybe it's at the local library or the museum. There are just a tremendous number of places, millions of places certainly in the U.S, where we want to be generous, but just don't have the tools to do so if we don't happen to have a spare single or \$5 bill in our pocket.

[00:28:04]

FT: I ask this of all my guests because I think it can be really revealing and also, well we can learn so much about failure. So what is your biggest financial failure in your career, you're only in your late 20's, so maybe you don't have a lot to choose from, which is hopefully a good thing. You're biggest financial failure.

[00:28:23]

RK: I have been very lucky that I've been able to kind of follow my dreams at every point and so been cushioned by failure. I worked for two startups before starting Dip Jar, and one of them is still around, the other isn't. But I was young and I worked a lot for options and equity and that money, that labour is not gonna translate into financial gain. I didn't really make money from those jobs, and I guess you could say that that's a failure because I put "sweat equity" into something that wasn't gonna pay back. But I don't really think of it as failure, I think of it really as an opportunity for learning because without those experiences I wouldn't have been able to start my own company, which hopefully will be a story with a happier ending.

But I remember my college graduation, our commencement speaker was J.K. Rowling and if anyone hasn't seen her speech, just Google "J.K. Rowling, Harvard 2008". What a phenomenal speech, and it was all about all of the failures that she had endured before she wrote the Harry

Potter books and how that what could be called failure was actually the foundation on which she was able to build something great. I really internalized that back when I was 22 years old, and it really has stuck with me that failure is just another name for lessons learned. So that's how I think of it.

[00:30:07]

FT: Failure is another name for lessons learned. Well let's change gears here, switch gears and talk about success. A So Money moment Ryder, you climbed that financial mountain, you high-fived it.

[00:30:25]

RK: [Laughs] High-fiving a financial mountain. So I think I already mentioned it. My proudest moment as an entrepreneur was really just one moment as part of my Dip Jar experience when I walked into a coffee shop that had had Dip Jar for a few months and had a barista there say that her last payment from Dip Jar, so that's two weeks of tips through the Dip Jar, had covered her electric bill that month. That was So Money because I was like, "Oh this thing I'm building actually is helping people in a really salient way. And this really cool young woman who's working at the coffee shop and just trying to live her life, and I don't really know what her broader aspirations are. I don't know if she's trying to be an artist or just loves working at a coffee shop or wants to be a volunteer or become a nurse.

I don't really know, but all I know is she's working in this coffee shop and she's trying to pay her rent and she's trying to cover her electric bill, and I saw that our product was helping her do that. That was just like totally edifying for me and really, really energizing. And if there were ever a moment, and there were, where I thought, "Why am I doing this? I could just read 19th century novels in the library and I'd be sweating a lot less and I'd be going to sleep earlier." But moments like that made me realize that what we're building actually has to exist, so I'm not gonna stop until there are millions of people like that one barista, Jess, who are benefiting from the Dip Jar technology.

[00:32:06]

FT: How about a financial habit, Ryder? Something that you do habitually, consciously, it doesn't have to be every day, but it is a part of your approach to staying financially healthy.

[00:32:18]

RK: Things that I do to stay financially healthy? I don't think I'm a good role model for financial health. To speak very frankly, I think I probably spend too much money given the fact that I'm by far the lowest paid person at my company. I still go to coffee shops every day. I probably spend \$10 a day on coffee. Just this morning I spent \$7 on a brioche and a coffee on my way to work as I do every day. And that is not strictly responsible financial habit formation.

[00:33:02]

FT: Well, I mean, you're not in debt.

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RK: So I'm not in debt, and I'm really lucky about that. Within reason, I spend money on things that make my quality of life such that I can be happy and continually be motivated. And that includes a fancy dinner out or a movie, or maybe a Broadway show that Suze Orman might say, "You cannot afford this".

[00:33:28]

FT: Oh whatever! Don't worry about Suze Orman.

[00:33:31]

RK: [Laughs] I do love Suze.

[00:33:34]

FT: Don't let her rain on your brioche parade! Okay?

[00:33:36]

RK: I will not. And it's because I think of consumption's moving, God-willing, this company's gonna be successful. If not, I'll have other opportunities for success down the road. So I might be living a little bit beyond my means now, but I will hopefully be able to make that up later, and certainly I can be very thankful, if nothing else, I'll still have a safety net from my family. So I guess I would say that a little bit of risk-taking financially when you can afford to do so is great. But I totally understand that that opportunity to take risk is not available to many or even most people. But in terms of my financial habits, they're all bad. They're all the \$7 brioche and coffee in the morning and the astronomical amount I pay for my gym membership every month even though I don't think I've seen the inside of that gym since democrats controlled the Senate. So it's a lot of habits that aren't great, but they're hopefully good in a roundabout way in that they enable me to continue to pursue this passion and continue to be a motivated entrepreneur.

[00:34:51]

FT: I like that. I'm gonna file that under #human, because we all have that gym membership that we're not using it. But you're the first to actually admit it, so thank you.

[00:35:02]

RK: It's my pleasure.

[00:35:04]

FT: Alright Ryder, almost wrapped here. We're gonna do some So Money Fill in the Blanks. I start off a sentence and you finish with the first thing that comes to mind.

If I won the lottery tomorrow, let's say \$100 million, the first thing I would do is _____.

[00:35:19]

RK: The first thing I would do is put a good chunk of that money into Dip Jar frankly. I think Dip Jar is my baby and I wanna be that coddling parent that can provide at every opportunity. So I'd put a good chunk of money into Dip Jar, and then I would probably take a little vacation.

[00:35:45]

FT: Yeah? Where would you go?

[00:35:47]

RK: Oh gosh. Top of my list right now is Amsterdam. A good friend just came back from there and said it was the most beautiful place she'd been. She loves it and I've never been there. That's the place that once we close our next round of financing, even if it isn't financed by the lottery, I will probably be taking a little vacation.

[00:36:08]

FT: Good for you. Amsterdam is beautiful. Everyone's on a bicycle. Yeah, go there.

[00:36:14]

RK: And I know they have good coffee.

FT: Yeah. They have a lot of other good things there too.

[00:36:19]

RK: [Laughs]

[00:36:20]

FT: The one thing that I spend on that makes my life easier or better is _____.

[00:36:24]

RK: The one thing I spend on?

FT: Yeah that makes your life easier or better.

[00:36:31]

RK: Food. I mean, I'm a reckless, I'm a classic New York stereotype. If you've looked in my oven you would see stacks of magazines that I don't have room to store elsewhere. I think that's not really true, I think that's a reference to Sex and the City where Carrie stores Vogues in her oven. But yeah, this is true, if you open my refrigerator you'll see nothing but bottled water and beer. And I don't even drink beer. Beer is just to give to guests when they come over. But I eat out and order in every night and that is just, you know, my parents are wonderful people but I grew up in New York City, no one was ever cooking meals so I never learned that going to the grocery store and buying ingredients and then making a meal for myself. But it really keeps me happy that I can order in every night and I do save a lot of time. When other people are going to the grocery store, I can be working.

[00:37:31]

FT: So that's how you justify it? Yes it's time saved. And you're right, I live in New York, it's so easy to order in what you want when you want it delivered to your door. You don't have to worry about cash, it's all automated. It's too easy. So would you say that's your biggest guilty pleasure? Cause that's my next question. My biggest guilty pleasure that I spend a lot of money on is _____.

[00:37:55]

RK: Yeah, that would definitely be that guilty pleasure. Although, I don't really feel that guilty about it. I know myself and even if I did buy ingredients at the grocery store, I wouldn't know what to do with them. At least ordering from seamless or ordering from a local restaurant or

going out to one, gives me the opportunity to tip and leave a big tip, and you know that is something that I love to do and it's something that my business thrives on. So interacting with tip-earners also helps me as an entrepreneur because I can talk to them and hear their concerns and hear kind of what they're looking for out of a solution like ours. So I can also justify it in that it helps me be a better business person cause it keeps me close to my customer. But really it's just that I'm too lazy to learn how to cook.

[00:38:46]

FT: Yeah, and Thai food can be at your house in 20 minutes flat, or you can just walk outside.

[00:38:52]

RK: So delicious in New York.

[00:38:54]

FT: Ah yeah, it's almost lunch time here in New York City. You've got me thinking.

When I donate money I like to give to _____ because _____ (speaking of generosity all this time).

[00:39:04]

RK: Yeah, I really love to give to a tremendous variety of causes. Often they are political causes and sometimes they're just general humanitarian things like there's a great charity called "Mazon" which is a Jewish charity but it addresses hunger issues amongst all communities. I also love to give back to the schools I went to. Harvard and my high school here in New York, Hunter High School, which is such a tremendously amazing place that I think people don't know enough how wonderful it is, although Cynthia Nixon when there, they might know it that way. But yeah, because all of those things, whether they're organizations that helped make me who I am, or they're things that are serving the needs of people who don't have the same opportunities, or they're supporting causes that I think won't make the political landscape in a way that will better

support the kind of opportunity creation I'm interested in. There's a lot of different angles to come at that. And I wish I could give more, but it's a problem when you're trying to build a company and still afford to live in New York. I look forward to the day that, maybe it won't be winning the lottery, but maybe it'll be just building something that gives me a little more resources to give back to the community in a more broad way.

[00:40:37]

FT: And I'm Ryder Kessler, I'm So Money because _____.

[00:40:42]

RK: [Laughs] I'm So Money because I'm doing something I have no business to be doing. When I pitch my product and I talk about the fact that we build hardware and we're in the payment space, they say, people will say, "Who are you? And you're, what? You're someone who has a master's degree in 19th century British novels?"

[00:41:10]

FT: And you are??

RK: But you know, I'm So Money! That's why I can do it, because this is something I'm passionate about and things that I didn't know how to do, I've learned how to do or I've found people smarter than me who know how to do them better. And I think that's just the key to being an entrepreneur, and maybe it's a key to more things in life, although I don't have the business to say so. But don't let your lack of experience prevent you from doing something because the only way to get the experience is to just dive in.

[00:41:47]

FT: Wonderful, and thank you for diving into this interview, Ryder. Really appreciate that you really brought it. Congratulations and good luck. Best wishes. Wishing you continued success with Dip Jar and ever after. Come back.

[00:42:01]

RK: Thank you so much.

[00:42:02]

FT: We'd love to have you back.

[00:42:03]

RK: I would love to. It's been a lot of fun.

[00:42:04]

FT: Thanks so much Ryder!

[END]